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GARDEN OF THE TUILERIES, PARIS

THE EMPLACEMENT OF SCULPTURE

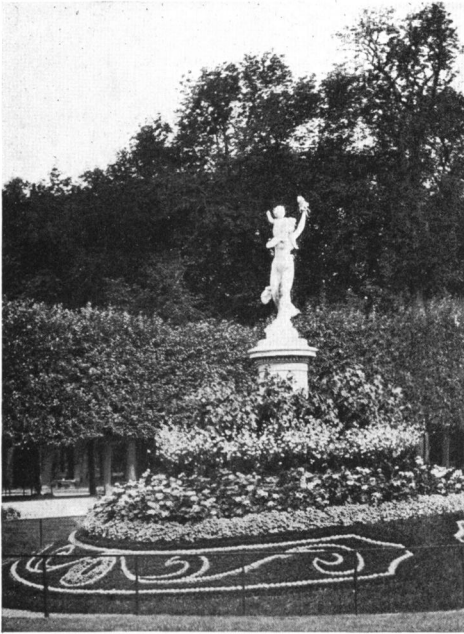
BY CHARLES MULFORD ROBINSON

ONE who goes abroad to observe recent municipal development, however hurriedly he travels and for however brief a period, is likely to fill his notebook with many observations on unexpected subjects. I found myself in a trip last autumn becoming interested in the placing of municipal sculpture—both as respects its site and the development of the site—when that sculpture stands out-of-doors and distinct from any building.

My attention was called to the matter the very first afternoon on land. It was Sunday, and I strolled into the garden of the Tuileries in Paris. Though I had seen the sculpture there many times before, it somehow on this occasion

started a line of thought which insured an interest in the matter throughout the rest of the trip. As everybody knows, the garden of the Tuileries is developed in a formal way, and a good deal is made of the sculpture. It is not all of the highest order, but when one sees a marble group on a well-proportioned marble pedestal, set in the center of a square of turf, with a background of foliage behind it so that its every line stands out clearly, one realizes how important and even dominating an ornament of a public garden a piece of sculpture may be made.

The placing of these Tuileries statues, which most are emphasized, is sufficiently



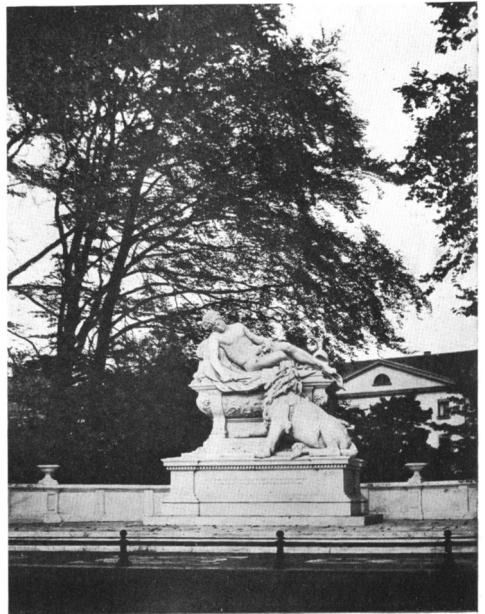
SCULPTURE AT ST. GERMAIN

familiar; but so ingenious is it, and so little do we practice the art in this country, that it is worth while to take note of the arrangement. The square of turf in which the statue stands is flower-bordered, and thus, presenting a barrier that is free from unwelcome suggestion, it holds the spectator back to just the proper distance from the statue. He cannot get too near, and neither, the promenade being limited, can he get too far away. He is obliged to see the sculpture from the best possible viewpoints, and these viewpoints being foreseen, the most desirable background is arranged. Furthermore, to invite his attention, seats are placed along the promenade, and these seats face the statue. One may sit down with no thought whatever of enjoying sculpture, but the arrangement is such that he has to look at it, and slowly or quickly, according to the mood, its influence gets into his spirit. I was reading the other day extracts from a paper presented by E. A. Rickards before the Royal Institute of British Architects, in which he remarks on the absurdity of setting up the presentment of a philosopher "seated or standing on a lonely base

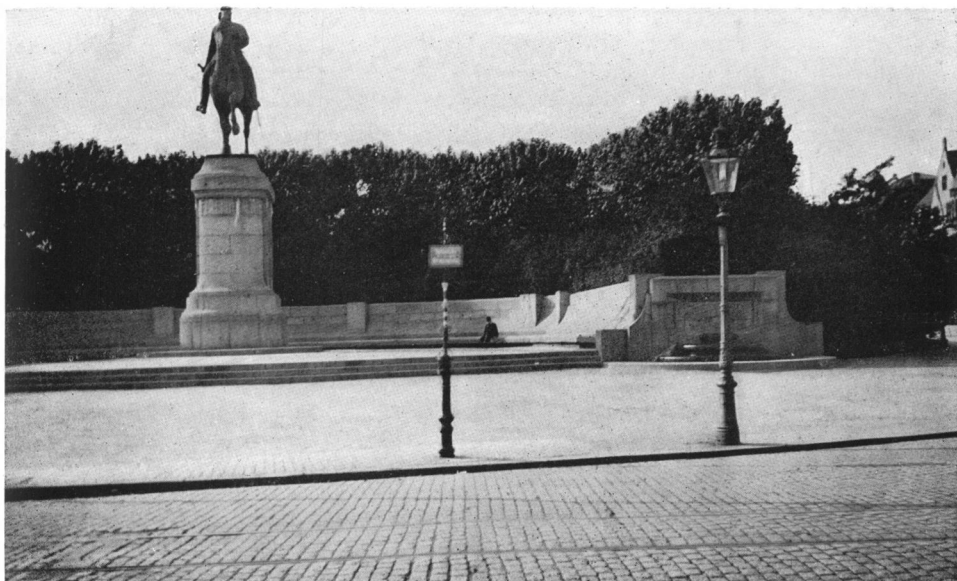
in the center of a large piazza, or open traffic space." How much better is this French way of locating a bit of sculpture!

Then in Cologne I came across one of many interesting examples of the location of an equestrian statue on a public highway. It is so common to see these stuck in the middle of a busy street—a proper place enough, no doubt, for a horse, but a poor place for a horse that cannot move and that is there only to be looked at. In the instances to which I refer the horseman stands in a semi-circular space especially arranged for him at the side of the street, on a pavement slightly raised above the sidewalk, with a background of dense foliage behind him, and with a sweeping exedra around him that lends an architectural setting to emphasize the effect.

This idea is carried out, of course, in an extreme way in the Sieges Allée in Berlin. There we have a thing which is good when done by itself, repeated over and over again until it becomes monotonous. Instead of a strikingly impressive monument, we have a series of



SCULPTURE AT DÜSSELDORF



AN INTERESTING LOCATION OF AN EQUESTRIAN STATUE ON A HIGHWAY AT COLOGNE

ancestors drawn up on parade to honor the Emperor as he passes.

But perhaps more interesting still as a study is the location of sculpture when the purpose is to emphasize its spirit rather than simply to ornament a place. It is the idea to which Lorado Taft gave expression when he once said, at a dinner, that it should be our purpose to "people our parks, not with long-coated statesmen and restless warriors, but with figures of airy grace, fit denizens of woods and meadows." In Europe we see this thought carried out beyond the point of merely selecting an appropriate general location. Effort is repeatedly made so to develop the immediate environment that it shall be in harmony with the sculpture, and by speaking in unison with the sculpture shall give to the latter's voice the greater power.

A good example of this is to be found at Wiesbaden, where the hero, who is the subject of an important monument, is raised on a high pedestal, at the base of which is a figure holding up to him the Victor's palm. The monument itself stands on a terrace, and around the broad base flowers are arranged in beds that make huge garlands. Sculptor and

gardener have united in creating a single composition, which is to the glory of the man commemorated. An instance of similar kind, but representing a different spirit, is that of a statue at St. Germain. A female figure holding a child on her shoulder, and with the other hand holding a bauble for which the child is reaching, is the very embodiment of the spirit of play. The group rises from a great flower bed, crowded with the gayest blossoms, which rise higher and higher as one approaches the center, until the pedestal itself is almost hidden. On the turf around the outside are geometrical figures, grotesque and extravagant, as if marking the course which the sprites of play had taken in dancing around the spirit in the center. With somewhat more delicacy of expression one finds this connection between subject and environment in the rose garden of the Tiergarten at Berlin. In its center there is a very charming figure of the beautiful Queen Louise. Could she be placed more suitably than in the midst of an acre of roses! They perfume the air where she seems to have passed. They hold up their own queenly heads, as if paying homage to her, and they strew

with petals the path which she must follow. Of a different spirit still is the soldiers' memorial in Düsseldorf—a tender and beautiful thing in itself, which receives more of its effectiveness than can be easily measured from its location under the spreading branches of a tree. These lean over the young dying warrior with all the seeming tenderness and affection that a mother would show. And between the cold marble and the warm foliage there is the contrast between death and life.

The Art Commission of the City of New York in its latest report attempted to lay down some rules for the location of urban sculpture. It named the following as fundamental principles: "A monument should be so placed that it is in proper relation both architecturally and

sculpturally to the spot in which it is located, be it street, square or park, that its commemorative or particular character is in harmony with its surroundings; and that it is, and will remain, a distinct adornment to the locality in which it stands." The Commission urged, also, consideration of the probable permanence of the present surroundings. These fundamental principles are important, of course, and it was well to enunciate them, but surely they do not tell the whole story. There still is need of putting the spirit of the statue into its setting. We cannot separate the one from the other. If they be not in harmony, the one negatives the other. It is trite to say this, but how seldom, in the sculpture of American cities, one sees the principle observed.

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME

A UNION of the American Academy in Rome and the American School of Classical Studies in Rome has recently been effected by the joint action of the governing boards of the two institutions. The School will be consolidated with the Academy, and the scope of the Academy will be enlarged so as to include not only architecture, sculpture and painting, but also the archeology, literature and history of the classical and later periods. There will thus be two schools within the Academy, a School of Fine Arts and a School of Classical Studies; and the Academy will represent America in Rome in all branches of artistic and classical culture.

About a year and a half ago the Villa Aurelia, on the summit of the Janiculum Hill in Rome, was devised to the Academy by the will of Mrs. Clara J. Heyland, formerly Miss Jessup, of Philadelphia, who wished to create a memorial of her parents and to encourage the

study and practice of the fine arts, and within a very short time, through the assistance and co-operation of Mr. A. E. Jessup, the brother of Mrs. Heyland, the Academy will take possession of the Villa Aurelia. The present home of the Academy, the Villa Mirafiore, while a delightful residence with spacious grounds, is, nevertheless, far from the monuments and remote from their stimulating influences, and the permanent establishment of the Academy within the walls where the students will feel themselves constantly in the presence of ancient Rome is of the highest importance. The Villa Aurelia, on the highest point within the walls, with a view over the whole city and country from the Alban Hills to the Mediterranean, satisfies these requirements; it is adjacent to the Villa Pamfili Doria, just above the Spanish Academy, and is near several famous monuments of antiquity and within easy walk of Saint Peter's and